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THE LATE MR. KATTERBY

MAURICE LAZAR

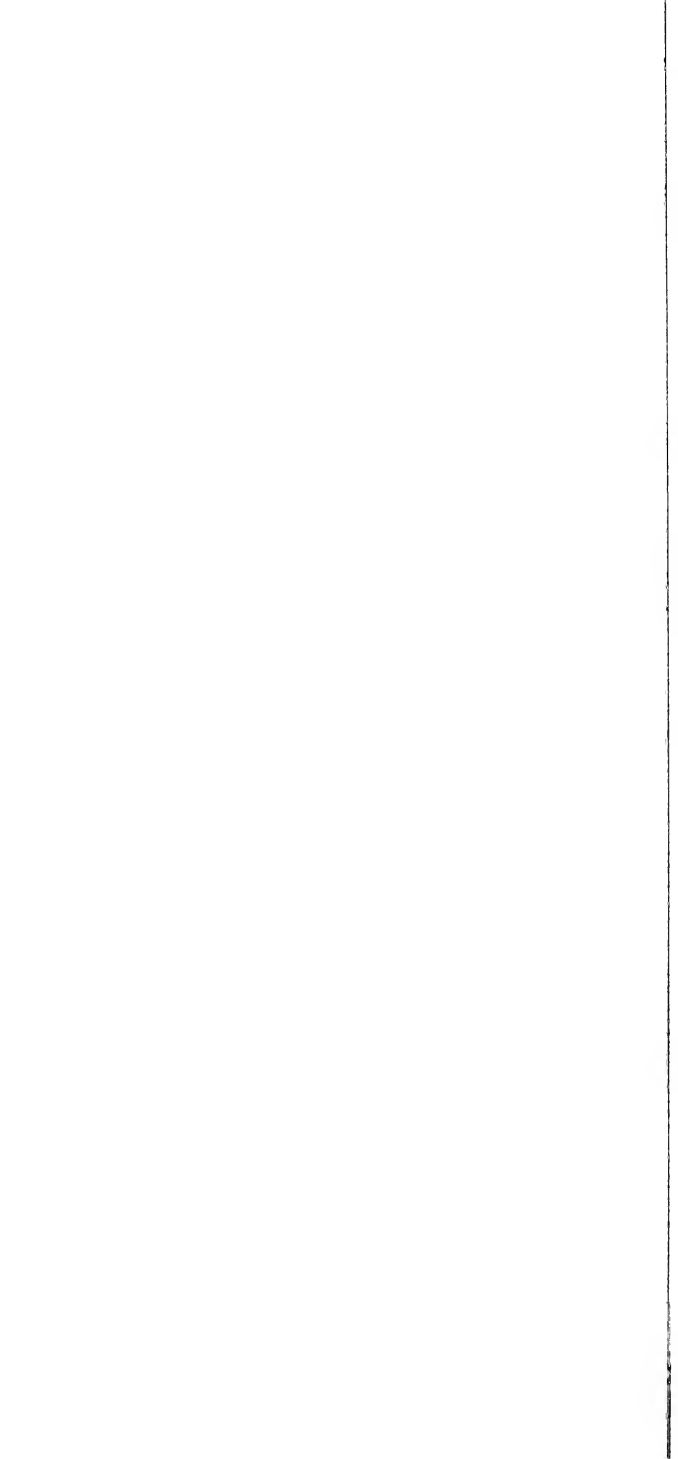


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THE LATE
MR. KATTERBY

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A MONOGRAPH
BY
MAURICE LAZAR

*My hand I can give, willingly enough, but my
mind I grudge: and it is my mind which Convention
would seal for her own with a tall hat.*

—JOHN EGLINTON

WALTER M. HILL
22 EAST WASHINGTON STREET
CHICAGO

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TO
WALTER M. HILL

INTRODUCTION

Many readers of this commemorative essay will remember that when Benjamin Katterby died human beings everywhere mechanically abandoned their pursuits to contemplate his departure. A uniform dejection prevailed throughout the world. The man had done so much for the little place and its inhabitants, had so highly dignified human history for the last twenty-five years, that his death was deplored in intelligent human circles. So that this indiscreet biographical work, a tribute to the genius that evolved the Katter-Scatter pill and amplified the digestive powers of the stomach, may interest a few persons. Especially those who ponder the experiences of life.

How the late Mr. Katterby responded to the forces that comprised his environment and his characteristics I have not told in detail. A man's mode of living is familiar enough to most of us. What he does matters hardly as much as how he does things. The manner, not the matter, charms us. And bearing in mind the tendency of readers to dwell fondly on the relatively significant pages and

skip the leaves that make the few interesting parts possible, the present biographer has concerned himself mainly with what he regards as Katterby's most interesting exploits. Possibly future historians will do more for him than has been done here.

Katterby had keen insight. From many points of view he was uncommonly expressive. I recall delightful conversations with him even as I write, and as I put down the gravely uttered tenets of his philosophy I regret I cannot enhance them with an account of his inflections and mannerisms:

"I suspect the motives of philanthropists, beggars, capitalists and wage-earners, reactionaries and radicals. I can not trust him who is one or the other. No person can be sensitive to the forces of existence and remain classifiable. What I have learned of the mammals we typify as curiously as we do leads me to hold this belief. Essentially, man is a bifurcated atom, powerless to arrange the details of his existence. Our separate piping Pans have little social significance. We are all dependent particles of the entire protoplast."

I quote from several letters written by Katterby:

"Intelligent men and women cherish no fixed conceptions; they are receptive, on the contrary, to the variable manifestations of human intercourse. Would it not be wise for us all to take a more personal and sincere interest in opportunities for social

intercourse than we have taken in the past? I mean, specifically, to endow with our individual energies the collective life of the community we compose

"In exploiting the Katter-Scatter pill, I appealed to the public in terms that spelt its lighter, gayer moods. I studied the various amusements our civilization has forced us to fashion; by observing the people who were relishing their pleasures I learned how to attract them; and in this way did I realize the profound distinction between the appetites of the average human being and those of the socially refined creature

"My progress, let me use the erroneous term, has been very ordinary. No secret, no mystery. Of course, there were many obstacles. But I was persistent. My unscrupulousness was equalled only by my energy. In time I became a member of that small band of men whose potential intelligence and social power really determine all the rules for people like you, poor chap."

This new Democritus invariably laughed when I reproached him for cherishing his "detachments" even when deeply concerned by some social incident. "You never let go of your philosophical yardstick," I said. "An emotional characteristic —"

And he said: "I should become helpless had I to be

deprived of that cerebral faculty you classify as an instinct. For that matter, all instincts are the sparks that fly from the clashing of matter against matter. So that my philosophical yardstick, or my instinct, or my sparks, expresses my consciousness of those forces that are not my own forces, and are therefore antagonistic forces. I can no more help being 'detached,' as you put it, than you can of commenting on the peculiarity. So why distinguish between the sources of possibly variable, but probably similar, human manifestations? Really, they are all the same: there is nothing to distinguish.

"I get from life a great diversion: the interests that comprise my mental existence. I enjoy applying my pathetic conception of any given universal dimension to any given social fact. Not that the recurrent spectacle of human imbecility exhilarates me. It does no such thing; nor does it depress me. It simply is. And my knowledge of this historically familiar condition tends to free my mind for the pleasurable contemplation of the life about me. As for my tendency to speculate about this and that, I wish to state that for me it is not merely stimulating to philosophize about things, but imperative; as imperative as is eating, or sleeping, or drinking

"We all crave sensations. Exaggerations of ordinarily familiar objects fetch us irresistibly. Well

then, name for me a greater stimulus to life than contemplation of life. What so invigorating? A keener illusion than his mentality the human being may never know. But I'm not sure of that. I'm not sure of anything. Not even of not being sure."

I think of all this now. The wisdom of one age provides its successor with platitudes. Thinking must seem an illusory cerebral activity, even to moralists. Kisses charitably bestowed must lack charm, and men and women still develop intimacies in keeping with the traditions. So——?

Chicago, 1919

LAZAR

CHAPTER I

Katterby began as an institution with the hurricane of March, 1888, which dismantled the dam across the Sacaton River and helped it to flow over the lower banks and set the town of Sacaton afloat. The newspaper reporter who was dispatched from Chicago to immortalize the disaster composed a remarkable description * of it. Apparently he possessed verbal powers of a kind; maybe today he is wealthy and the respected author of innumerable literary masterpieces. But it is a fact that the storm destroyed a number of men, women, children and beasts, and deprived many citizens of certain essential comforts. Very trying was the experience of Adam Buder, locally eminent Doctor of Medicine, Chiropodist, and Veterinary Surgeon, who sub-

* The frantic efforts of the panic stricken townsmen to stem the onrushing waters were made negligible by the wind, which had seized the freight depot in its howling jaws and spat it out again a mess. Telegraph poles were laid low, as were also a number of the houses. Soon the town became an assemblage of roofs, floating timbers, pieces of furniture and unmoored cottages. For three days the townfolk were confined to their homes, or what had been left of them, while the wind tore around buildings and whistled through jagged walls and into chimneys. Now and then it derisively blew great mouthfuls of water from the streets over roofs and through shattered

sequently involved Katterby in the manufacture of Katter-Scatter pills. I quote from the latter's diary:

"Adam Buder was fat and shortlegged. He panted when he stooped to inspect a horse's legs. For years he had suffered from some stomach ailment, and had bought and tried in turn every patented medicament which I sold in the old drugstore. When he shouted my name early the third day after the storm I suspected he was in trouble. I hurried to the window of the attic to which we had been driven by the flood and saw Adam sitting in a boat. A sour look was on his face, and he cried miserably: 'Say, Katterby, I feel awful; fix me up quick, will you, like a good chap?'

"By this time most of the drugs downstairs were soaked through and through. The water was at least three feet high. My wife was sick in bed, and windows. It puffed out of sight objects that for years had identified Sacaston to visitors: the hitchingpost, for instance, Harold Fisher (champion whiskey drinker) and his dog Hal, Jr.

People didn't miss the dog so much, nor did they think in definite terms of Harold. Most of them were busy transferring bedding and food supplies from the lower to the upper floors of the houses. On the third day a few venturesome citizens got into boats and rowed through the streets.—From a Chicago newspaper of March 11, 1888.

little Margaret would surely cry if she were left alone and annoy her mother. I yelled to Adam to hang on while I hunted up some of the cascara sagrada I had prepared for Jackson's cattle.* The moment I ran downstairs little Margaret began to cry and the sound of the splashing in the store must have frightened her and her mother. But I got hold of a few pieces of the cascara and hurried back to the attic. Adam seemed to be suffering. He was shivering and sweating and too far gone, he feebly said, to do much for himself. Of course there was no way of getting him into the house, and he wasn't able to climb up to us along the wall. So I threw the paper covered slices of the cascara into his boat and told him to row no matter how much he would suffer. He said something I couldn't catch about having vertigo, but he plied the oars desperately enough and the last I saw of him that day he was rowing steadily toward his cottage, a short distance back of the town's business section.

"A week later, when the flood had receded so that you could safely wade through the streets, Doc Bu-

* Unusual as it is for a druggist to prepare the California buckthorn bark, Katterby had to keep a supply on hand for Jackson's cattle, which stagnated when locked up in bad weather. From this supply came relief to Adam Buder, Doctor of Medicine, Chiropodist, and Veterinary Surgeon.

der splashed up to the store in hipboots. 'Believe me you fixed me up right,' he said. He outlined a plan to exploit the cascara. He was enthusiastic. 'Pills made of what you gave me would be the scatterers . . .' he said. The word fascinated me: Katterby's Scatterers. Katter . . . scatter. Katter-Scatter, by George! . . . That's how the name was evolved.

"Doc helped to get things started. Mrs. Katterby was confined at the time, getting ready to have our second little girl, Elizabeth, and I had my hands full. People weren't interested in anything but repairing the damage caused by the storm, and the problem of creating a fund for the construction of a new dam across the Sacaston River disturbed the public consciousness.

"The weekly newspaper wanted advertisements from storekeepers in town and I inserted a notice that attracted attention. In a small town, no matter what opinion prevails publicly, an association of familiar and historical (and therefore impressive) facts immediately distracts people. The combination worked well in my first advertisement, which included a portrait that purported to show the heavily lined features of Ponce de Leon, and an arrangement of this text: 'The Intrepid Old Voyager would not have sought in vain for the Elixir

of Youth had he lived Today——Have YOU tried our Katter-Scatter pills?’

“Customers asked for samples. But no samples were given away. Soon there were many sales daily.”

Katterby became keenly interested in his pills. He referred to them often in conversation. He mailed specimen packets to noted chemists and other men of science; to lawyers, politicians, prizefighters and literary men. He advertised the pills in all the newspapers of Sacaston County. The fame of the product spread. Druggists, soever distastefully, were obliged to buy the Katter-Scatter pills. Before the end of that year Katterby had to take the iron foundry near the rebuilt Sacaston dam and converted it into a drugmill in order to manufacture sufficient quantities of the pills. He deserted his pharmacy to acquire wealth by the distribution of his cure-all for the world’s stomach.

Soon after his second daughter was born, Katterby was asked to address the people of Sacaston on the desirability of reëlecting Mayor Thomas Trent, the saloonkeeper. The honor was extended to him by the mayor, but its sincerity was not to be questioned. Katterby accepted and a fortnight later—to an audience that packed the Town Hall—he commented cheerfully on Trent’s virtues. On this diverting topic he talked for fully ten minutes, and for the remaining hour and a half only too modestly ex-

toll'd the virtues of his pills. His speech created a furore. Trent was again elected mayor of Sacaston. People bought larger quantities of the "scatterers" as they were now affectionately called in the middle West.

In that remarkable first pamphlet which Katterby got out for the public, there was a brief account of his career. The publication contained some testimonials from famed persons, such as Th. de Lace Bimbelow, author of stories of highly refined amour who was enabled, he wrote, to compose many chapters of melodious prose with the stimulating aid he derived from the wonderful pills; and Prof. Gimmel, of Dass University, who swore by all the anthropoid baboons whose bones he had disinterred in China that life without the Katter-Scatter pills for him would be vacuous; and Doctors Babb and Cohen,* who testified to the power of the Katterby product, with communicating warmth.

The pamphlet was a success, the first edition of it speedily exhausted. Book collectors broke into private houses armed with jackknife and sandbag and deliberately pilfered the precious work. At public auctions that were conducted under the frightened inspection of bepistoled policeman, the pamphlet—

* Authors of "Worry: Its Cure;" "An Exhaustive Inquiry Into Goiter and Its Alarming Prevalence among Respectable Families;" etc.

in its pale green covers the cynosure of all eyes, the darling of all hearts — drew high bids from fabulously wealthy men. Those who failed to add the unique bit of literature to their possessions straightway expired of disappointment. Today a possessor of the first edition or of the eighth—of which I shall presently sing—dare not proclaim his proud proprietorship lest he be immediately waylaid, his body mutilated and deftly dropped into the conveniently nearest streetsewer, and his private library ransacked.

The following year Katterby moved with his wife, two daughters and business to Chicago, where he planned to concentrate on the manufacture of his pills for all.

CHAPTER II

Katterby expanded mentally and socially in the next ten years. His factories in the West Side of Chicago were augmented from time to time until on June 24, 1898, when he and I first met, he owned and operated fourteen ten-story buildings that occupied fifty acres of a sixty-acre tract of ground. Twelve thousand men and women toiled conscientiously in this monstrous beehive and daily produced innumerable cartons-full of Katter-Scatter pills. In 1898 his fame was secure, his career a matter of human history. Prodigious was his publicity expenditure. No matter where you might be of a day, in Calcutta or Buenos Aires, in London, San Francisco or in Paris, at the North Pole or the South Pole, billboarded lithographs or newspaper advertisements familiarly reminded you of "What Ponce de Leon Missed"; of "The Infant's Delight"; of that which "Makes Grandfather Happy." Often were you cautioned to add a Katter-Scatter pill to your meals. These kindly notices were printed in that language you happened to be using.

One of the Katterby buildings was a printing establishment manned every day, year in and year

out, by three eight-hour shifts of advertisement-writers and translators, stenographers, proofreaders, printers, pressfeeders, binders, shippers, and others. From this building alone were shipped trainloads of books, pamphlets, folders, letters, cards, and similar matter that contained pill-literature. These were printed in American, in English, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese; in Polish, Hungarian, Russian, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Armenian, Gaelic, and Yiddish: in all tongues, minor as well as major.

Another Katterby building contained a restaurant used exclusively by the employees; still another was subdivided into bathrooms, gymnasiums, music halls, classrooms and laboratories. Firsthand courses were given in various departments of human knowledge by genuinely equipped teachers. No person could work for Katterby and not show aptitude in the study of the natural sciences, or in sociology, or in the useful and the fine arts. The employees were given their choice of studies in this thrice-blessed school. One could be a linguist, but not a philologist; a student of economics but not an economist. One could study music and even become a practical musician, but no instruction was there for him who aspired to a professional career. One could study chemistry, but could not specialize on chemical combinations that evolve explosive force. The student

was directed in the appreciation of literature, but was not encouraged to eject literary expression. One could, one was urged in fact to, study the manifold functionings of the human body, but never to become a metaphysical anatomist. One could learn many things. Everyone had to read, write and speak the American tongue individually and explicitly. For, as Katterby once put it: "Teach a chap to know the printed and spoken word, and he may learn to discern the truth under the lies in which it is usually buried."

It was also customary to omit the prefixes "Mr." "Mrs." and "Miss." The women in the lactose laboratories addressed their forewomen by their surnames, as did the men in calling upon their own department managers.

It was to meet Katterby that I presented my letter of introduction to his secretary the morning of June 24, 1898. It was hard to arrange the meeting, and had I not twitched Katterby's coatsleeve as he passed by in the reception room I would have lost my interview. For—then I knew it not—Katterby did not esteem the intellectual honesty of newspaper men and professional writers. He stared as I explained my mission:

"I'm from *The Semicolon* office and I want a few remarks from you advising young men to work hard that they may prosper in life."

Katterby smiled and said kindly, "I usually advise young men to work hard that their employers may prosper. But you may tell your editor to smell with his own nose, if you wish."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. I need the job."

"You appear to need a job. Well, come with me and we'll chew the rag."

We sat in his office and talked and talked and talked. Or rather he talked while I listened. He sat in a swinging rocking armchair and his feet at times pointed upward from his desk. Occasionally he gesticulated, or, as he smilingly explained the movements of his hands and arms, underlined his important remarks. I remember his abrupt explanation of his change of mind about talking with me: "You interested me because you need a shave, a decent suit of clothes, a new hat, shoes, and still you seem to be self-sufficient."

I told him I was very comfortable, and elaborated the theory that the average student of human activity has little time for such social details as fine dress.

Said KATTERBY: So you profess an interest in human activity! Why? Are you a misanthrope?

I: Our surroundings, and that evanescent thing we term personality, heighten the stature of people far beyond their true outlines. You, you tell me, are a philosopher. You at times reason things out and achieve the illusion of detachment from all this

exaggeration. You are — for the moment, remember — beyond the ineluctable matter that really comprises you and me and every organism in the world. You are, for the moment, capable of wisdom. You do not faint with admiration for your own talents. You convey your most exalted utterances in the familiar language of creatures with whom you would talk neither subtly nor formally, but intelligently and kindly. During that moment you have the truest wisdom of the human race.

KATTERBY (smiling ironically): What is your candid opinion of me this very moment?

I: It is candid . . . You say that the making of pills is your serious social enterprise. Of course there is no such thing. But let us call it that. Tell me, to be candid, why you manufacture —

KATTERBY (ponderously): "For the World's Stomach."

I: Seriously . . .

KATTERBY: Seriously, to capture the imagination of people. Of course people before me have thought of appealing to human intelligence by way of their carry-alls. And yet, can you tell me how many persons have been appealed to effectively in this fashion? Can you, without looking carefully into the matter, state how many persons think only when their stomachs are happy? You must admit

that I who am successful and a philosopher have done noble work for our race.

I: If it gives you pleasure, I admit that you have done well very modestly.

KATTERBY: It doesn't, but I want the admission.

I: You make me laugh.

KATTERBY: Thank you. I have a sense of humor. I am a humorist. A humorist is any person who has been able to laugh at his social insignificance. I have laughed. But you must have roared often into your sleeve: you are a professional writing man.

I: I haven't stopped laughing; that's the point. But you are a manufacturer——

KATTERBY: I'm afraid I have outworn the novelty [he grinned] of my singular position in the world.

I: Do you expect to find mental security for the rest of your life in that phantasy which literary men classify as intellectual skepticism?

KATTERBY: If you wish to put it that way. But a chap can be associated with some human arrangement and still be able to increase his perspective. I know this: I have never consciously deceived myself [he smiled].

I: Nor has any one, for that matter; not consciously. Yet how often most of us deceive our-

selves. If we were conscious of our aims, and could express our conceptions more freely we would not be so miserable as we are. I of course try to find my way about in the world, and I hope I shall never be the victim of circumstances like those which deceived Old Man Johnson.—Johnson, you may care to know, was an aged copyreader in the office of *The Semicolon*. For years he had deprived himself of the ordinary comforts of our civilization in order to increase his bank savings. He wanted to cherish the last few years he imagined were left to him in some quiet countryplace, where he could relax—far from the city's distractions—in bucolic friendships, read harmless old books, warm his decomposing bones in the summer sun, near the winter fireplace. So he scrimped and saved and scrimped and saved and presently died. He had cheated his body of nourishment in order to satisfy his dearest wish. He had asked more from his indifferently fed and poorly clad organism than he had given. And his banksavings were expended in an elaborate funeral and a banquet which the landlady of his horrible roominghouse tendered to her friends. So you see, this old man had consciously vitiated his reactions to the illusion that was his environment. He had defied it to master him. . . . He had a nice funeral.

KATTERBY: We all defy our circumstances.

The most successful man, no matter how rich or wise or healthy, can not be master of his fortune. I knew a man who was wealthy, but not wise; shrewd, yes, but fatuous about his physical powers. He was very old. His name was James Wright and he never laughed at himself, not even privately. He was very unhappy when he had to confirm with his signature his last will and testament. His name he wrote out in a flux of emotion. In his will he had set down the details of the revenge he sought to bring upon the conditions, or whatever-it-is that you call it, that had made of him in his old age an howling nincompoop. He was sure that he had been atrociously deceived by his young wife. Very bitter he was about it. He should have known that he had only himself to kick for his pains. A few months before he had met a girl who leased an apartment in one of his North Side buildings. The old chap took an interest in her and in the study she was making of the drama business. Finally he asked her to marry him. This alarmed his sister and his broker, his lawyer and his chauffeur, his chef and his butler, the members of his privately endowed Morals Inspection Brigade for the Safety of Our Kindergarten, and the director of his pet Home for Fallen and Wayward Boys of More Than Seventy Years. They evidently had planned for the future on the strength of his good will and his un-

expected marriage frightened them. They knew that he couldn't possibly live much longer. They must have thought that James Wright was too old to marry even though he had not married before. Well, he had money, houses, social opportunities of a kind for the young woman, and in the end he had his way. He married her. For a few days he was proud to be the husband of so comely and vigorous and healthy a creature as she. But he had not considered his own limitations. The nurturing of his physician had inspired him with much confidence in his physical energy (although his chemical resources were virtually exhausted), and you may imagine his bad temper when he realized now that he was married he had better get ready to die. He had planned, this silly old man, to challenge the tissues of his composition. He found himself ditched instead. He swore that he had been cheated; that his wife had married him only for his money and that, all in all, he was getting the dirty end of the deal. How to keep his lands and houses and money from his wife absorbed his enfeebled intelligence. He wanted to trick her out of his estate. In his will he stipulated that she was not to marry again within ten years after his death; that she was to abstain from friendship of any nature with any male person in that time; that on each anniversary day of his death she was to place on his grave a

bouquet of flowers. Soon after he had put all that into his will, he down and died. His cynical physician, who had already been intimate with the young widow, ascribed the death to pernicious anaemia. On every anniversary day, the physician and the widow motor to the exclusive and fashionable cemetery where James Wright is crumbling away and the young widow waits in the motor car while the physician drops flowers over the grave of the dead.

I: That's quite a story. From the French?

KATTERBY: No. So you are a student of human activity. I hope that some day the pathologists will treat clinically those whose realism is objective and therefore impossible. But let me take you through the factories and show you how the Katter-Scatter pills are made; the patrons to the world's stomach, the inevitable consequences of inevitable factors of inevitable —.

CHAPTER III

The elaborate mansion on Lake Shore Drive was a concession to Mrs. Katterby and her daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth. While Katterby was busy exploiting his pills, his wife sought distinction among members of the wealth-exclusive circles. The recognition she desired heaped up obligations that annoyed her constantly. But for her daughters she would never have tried to establish her family in "society." Katterby observed her petulance with affectionate irony and made no attempt to aid her. Her struggles with the complexities with which she was involved gained his sympathy. He longed for the simplicities of former days, which he and his wife had enjoyed. Only the insistent demands by the girls for "social" opportunities influenced him to purchase the esteem, as he termed it, of "society" people. Katterby was very fond of his daughters, especially of Elizabeth. He relaxed in companionship with them and had much joy in their spirited interests.

When I began to visit Katterby at his sumptuous residence, Margaret Katterby was twenty, Elizabeth, eighteen. The former had already been inoculated

with a superficial knowledge of life, dispensed by an expensively conducted private school. She was a pleasant, mentally vacuous creature. Her sole accomplishment, piano-playing, she displayed only when she wanted to impress people. Elizabeth, always about the house, was prone to evade personal duties on the grounds of her frailty. Neither of the sisters was physically attractive; nor, for that matter, were their parents. Mrs. Katterby was fat. Her youthful indifference to the hygienic niceties had been a potent factor in the protuberance of her abdomen (a fault too common in women who have been circumscribed mentally and physically by domestic work). But the early days of floorscrubbing in Sacaston had not robbed her of her cheerfulness. She had never indulged in any prolonged cerebral activity and her sympathies were intelligent. Katterby called her "Ma," and when playfully inclined, thumped her shoulder and told her she was a fat old girl but his sweetheart nevertheless. She delighted in the sentiment and he was glad to make her happy.

Katterby himself, as I could have told you before, was of medium height, slenderly fashioned, and endowed with uncommon energy. He expended little superfluous motion. If he wanted to reach for something he managed invariably to get it with less effort and in less time than many men would

ordinarily consume. Hardly ever did he have to go out of his way to execute self-appointed tasks. This economizing of effort was characteristic of him. But I should like to tell here of my first visit to Lake Shore Drive:

The doubled doors of the building were drawn back and as I entered a large hall I was slightly sensitive to the depreciatory inspection which Mrs. Katterby's butler conferred upon me. Katterby himself appeared and welcomed me heartily. He shouted at the doorway of the drawing room for "Ma" and for the girls. Within a few minutes we were seated comfortably chatting in a circle formed by our chairs.

We dined simply and well. The memory of Katterby's wines is very pleasant. Margaret Katterby declined the port which the butler served but Elizabeth drank freely, and became talkative. Presently Katterby led me into his library.

His collection, from which I often removed desired volumes, comprised, on the one hand, many works obviously of a literary character. On the other hand there were numerous works of a critical and scientific import. I could not get Katterby to discuss books objectively. When I brought the topic into our conversation he asked me to forgive him for being impervious to the appeal which books, as books, could make. "To me," he said, "with few

exceptions, books are meretricious first aids in the stirring business of straightforward living. It is true that I am fond of the writings of a few literary men. But I seek them out only when I want the simplest sort of diversion, the diversion I could never get in any native theater, unless I chance to see some good dancing. I like Mark Twain, for instance, the big man of American letters. Otherwise, a book that is to consume my time and attention must contain some information about natural phenomena, or about the gains we human beings have made, or fancy we have made, in our everlasting struggle with the forces in the universe. Or else books should be imbued with the charm of personalities that are too rare in my own social sphere. Science, a little literature, and that's about all. No philosophers for me. No philosophy can ever be written down. Never fear: the time will come when the literary tradition will mark the tombstone of the human race's childhood."

"That's one way of looking at it," I said. "At least it is reassuring to find that you can be emotional about something."

He smiled genially. "Literature, in the main, has all its material centered upon man's emotions. And only limitedly. But the investigating of natural forces, or, to use that word which you dread so much, 'science,' has no concern with the pic-

turization of us human beings in our queer unheeded antics, but with what is far more essential — natural elements. Suppose we consider the work of a man like Th. de Lace Bimbelow, that wonderful writer, people call him, of vigorous love stories. His characters seem always to be having trouble about sex, the most natural and invigorating fact in life, if there is a fact in life. Now sex isn't half so complicated a problem, if it is a problem, as it is complicating. A distinction which increased public knowledge will some day emphasize. But the members of the sixty-first generation after us may be the first to witness such intelligence manifesting itself. And by that time there will be more complications. But to come back to Bimbelow. There he is with his love stories, and here am I, for example — I, who do not write professionally, nor wish to, have done more for the human race with my Katter-Scatter pills than —." And Katterby laughed immoderately as I raised my hands in mute appeal.

From the diary of Benjamin Katterby, under the date July 29, 1898:

My experiences this day were extremely distracting. First I had to pay Doctor Branter eight hundred dollars for his last several examinations of Elizabeth. In spite of my anxiety he would not say whether my little girl will develop normally.

Looks like pronounced neuraesthesia to me. I suppose it is common for physicians who cater to wealthy men to regard them with sardonic eyes. That is, provided they possess sufficient intelligence. But the pity of it is that I have met but one or two who really knows anything worth imparting to others, apart from professional interests.

Then there was that newspaper appropriation. I had to increase my space for the next fiscal year. Fiscal! (But hush, fond pen!)

Then my advertising manager wanted my advice about dismissing his assistant. There have been complaints about this young man from other department managers. They say he won't obey orders. Still, every time I prowl through the department and slip into his office I find one or two managers seeking information. A bright young man, too active to make his superior feel secure about *his* job. Well, the advertising manager talked at length, and perhaps to good purpose. I discharged him and promoted his assistant.

Had some fun today: John Various, the circus-performer of the Gospels' circuit, wanted me to advertise him in conjunction with the pills. He enclosed with his letter a specially written testimonial. He did not forget, of course, to suggest that I send him a check for a thousand dollars by return mail. He tried to make this suggestion look

like a postscript to his letter; like an afterthought. Bet a nickel he'll yell and curse me up and down his platform when he gets my answer — a sample packet of the pills.

Got home rather late and found Forster waiting for me. He wanted money for the campaign fund for the Prohibitionists. He swallowed three highballs of my best Old Scotch while I scribbled a check for him. A sly cuss is Forster; resourceful, practical — at least he says he is — and simply louzy with moralistic platitudes. "I'm a plain man, Mr. Katterby," he says, treating me to the smell of my fine Old Scotch fuming up from his throat, "I have no pretensions. But we must keep our beautiful city free from the vicious and degrading influences of liquor."

Forster is a churchgoer. And of course he has a large family.

N. B. What perplexes me is the sincere praise which Forster is always ready to give my pills.

CHAPTER IV

By 1899 the pills were firmly fixed in the esteem of most people. Professional jesters had exhausted all possible sources of material for their more or less obvious witticisms. Actors were finally restrained from reiterating the "latest story" about the Katter-Scatter product. Vaudeville audiences could no longer be tricked into untrammelled laughter by ingenious allusions to it. Even newspapers omitted all references that were not of a socially significant nature. Naively conceived, and charmingly executed, Katterby's pill-publicity had attained household worship. The fame of him and his product had multiplied so that both were known everywhere.

Prominent businessmen, professional persons and artists made it their pleasure to seek out Katterby for a boon companion. At first they had ignored him. Now they pestered him so that he was obliged to participate in many social affairs. No banquet was held complete without him; no political gathering, graced not by his presence, attracted any attention. His utterances at the public dinner-table were usually recorded for posterity in the first

page columns of all the leading newspapers. He was no longer a national achievement, but an international institution. His fame added many burdens to those he was protestingly shouldering. "Now that I've got so much importance thrust upon me I shall have to live up to it in all seriousness." Then he would laugh and proceed verbally to manipulate certain facts in a way that would have edified pious atheists.

But he became tired of the speechmaking, of the banquets, of the sentimentality. In few of the men he encountered did he discern the stuff from which come graceful and benevolent philosophizings. No member of society appealed to him sufficiently to encourage friendship.

About this time he wrote in his diary: "Now they want me to enter political life. I see no need, not until I am old and garrulous. And then I should consider the matter for the amusement. . . . I wonder how the philosophers go through their several daily motions. They are forever thinking in terms of the universe just as I do in terms of the human stomach. But I suppose every human pursuit has its own peculiar fascination. . . . Have just taken a walk about my library. If Lazar keeps on grabbing my choicest works he'll soon have a respectable library of his own. Funny cuss, he. Considers everyone but himself seriously.

Must be something back of that pretension. The truth is, we all take everything seriously. We couldn't live as normally as we do a single minute if we didn't. Well, out of all the pretensions of matured human beings will some day come the things that will be worth while . . . maybe. I wonder what has become of the grace that manifested itself centuries ago in this world of ours."

Katterby was well liked by women. They appreciated his homilies. He had a way of making his impolitest utterances popular. In mixed company he could hold forth on tabooed subjects with a freedom that invariably made the men uncomfortable and the women happy. The men often had occasion to reflect that a few like Katterby, indiscriminately distributed about, would serve to unchain many restraints and hurl into Limbo most of our valued ideas.

When Margaret Katterby was married to Sebastian Felly, son of the manufacturer of the Pocket Nut-Cracker, the mansion on Lake Shore Drive was crowded with guests. Vast bundles of telegrams and letters of congratulation doubled the groaning bodies of the mailcarriers. For days and days no newspaper but had reference to some detail of the wedding. What Margaret Katterby wore at church absorbed the passionate interest of every other woman. And what Katterby said in connec-

tion with the marriage was repeated by clubmen, golfers, theater-firstnighters, and bartenders. They tapped their foreheads, I imagine, as knowingly as did their forefathers hundreds of years ago, to indicate how quickly the "queer druggist of Sacaston" was losing his sanity. Katterby merely commented on the ease with which ministers earn their livelihoods, but then he did it tolerantly. When he "gave his daughter-bride away" he was heard to mutter something about repeating one of our oldest barbarisms.

He sought me in his library, where I was relaxing bibulously in honor of the occasion. He told me at entertaining length just what he thought of the ceremony we call marriage. Katterby on the Profane Things of Life was a treat. He could enjoy his own dissertations, and was never afraid to stop in the course of an anecdote to share another's pleasure in a witticism of his.

"What," he inquired, "do you think of Margaret's male partner — Sebastian Felly?"

"He has a quaint and curious name," said I.

"Do you think he will be happy with her?"

"Do you think she will be happy with him?"

"I do not know, of course, but in the rôle of a happy father, whatever that is, I ought to express some anxiety. Ma has already done it, now I'm supposed to chip in and maintain the integrity of

the family. Just the same, Sebastian Felly appeals to me. He has no ideas about life, he still obeys his father and he is a good dancer."

"Man can ask no more," I said. And he suggested that we take a walk. So we left the silent house (Mrs. Katterby and Elizabeth were no doubt exchanging confidences upstairs, now that Margaret had deserted them), and as we strode northward along the lake shore we discussed the possible effects of further civilizing of the human race on the institution of marriage.

We considered also the accidents that determine the conduct of us all. Had not Doc Buder been sick when no other cure but that intended for Jackson's cattle was handy, Katterby might not have become renowned. He and I agreed that much fine human material has passed from birth to death without ever becoming expressive. "Chance acquaintanceships have made as well as marred many a human prospect," said Katterby, cheerfully.

We approached a nearsighted man whom I recognized as The Professor. He was cleaning a pair of spectacles with a two dollar bill and grumbling noisily. I introduced Katterby and he shook his head in indifferent acknowledgement as he completed his task. He stared fiercely the while he smoothed out his two dollar bill, and then he said:

"Your name is Katterby and you are not a

cheap organism. Your pills have often served me well. I have here" — and he drew from his pocket a small pamphlet — "all the wisdom of the world, embodied in a few pithy sayin's by me friend and master, Bilious Head, whose illustrious disciple you behold when you gaze into me wanderin' eye and start with surprise. I'm quite sure, me friend, you will prize this little book o' mine, and I'm askin' only ten cents for it to pay me back for the cost of printin'. Thank you. Let me hope to see again your smilin' face with cheerful grace."

We resumed our walk and I told Katterby of The Professor, who had come from England and was soapboxing at streetcorners and peddling secondhand philosophical concepts.

CHAPTER V

The memorable eighth edition of the Katter-Scatter pamphlet was issued in 1900, as were several other literary contributions to the pillmaker's science. Among the mediums of publicity which Katterby employed were bibles, whose flyleaves and endsheets he had covered with pill-advertisements. He supplied a large number of hotels with them, and explained his purpose in doing so in a letter to the hotelkeepers:

"The history of how two traveling salesmen of the old school founded the famed organization that today supplies hotelrooms with copies of our beautiful book of fictions, is familiar, and need not be redetailed to you. But in order to augment, so to speak, the highly diverting narratives of the original, I have added some choice snatches of prose, spontaneously evolved from the grey matter of shrewd professional phrasejugglers. The words on flyleaf and endsheet will console the weary traveler as he reclines in bed smoking his favorite stogie. They will reconcile him to the hardships of his calling and bring peace into his soul. Artfully soothed, our travelsore creature will unthinkingly

continue his reading into the sonorous pronouncements of Genesis. And one purpose of our Katter-Scatter pills will have been attained. Once again will the bible be the fond companion of him who seeks 'the beacon lights, the harbor home'."

The hotelkeepers were glad to have bibles for nothing.

But it was the sumptuous eighth edition of the pamphlet that captivated human hearts. Only fifty thousand copies were struck off, on vellum, bound in richest morocco, with handsome burned-in title-lettering. This edition was dedicated by Katterby to his daughter Elizabeth, of whom he was so fond. Scarcely had the edition been placed in the hands of Katter-Scatter pill-distributors when every copy but the one on the library shelf of the Katterby Factories, Inc. was hidden in the recesses of private collections. You have been told what happened when the first edition of the pamphlet went out of print. Imagine the frenzy of people who couldn't get a copy of the eighth edition. It was indeed a precious bit of bookmaking. Titillating as was the appearance, the contents were even more desirable. The prefatory note, set in runic type, was a racy bit of prose, gemmed with epithets.

One turned the first page and encountered a testimonial from Th. de Lace Bimbelow, the famous novelist. Of the numerous woodcuts that

adorned the delectable pages of the volume, three had been fetchingly placed among the verbal felicities of Mr. Bimbelow. One of the woodcuts depicted the author at his desk, his head grievously resting upon his folded arms, himself the picture of misery, the half-covered foolscap sheet nearby betraying its fond parent's mental hiatus. The second woodcut showed the author in the position of one who is desperately swallowing a Katter-Scatter pill, and the third cut presented him furiously traversing with his pen wide sheets of papers. Captions there were, too, reading, "Before Taking"; "Taking," and "After Taking." The testimonial which the grateful man indited is presented in full:

My dear Mr. Katterby:

Permit a long suffering man to inscribe these lines, expressive of his gratitude, in the behalf of my complete recovery. Now, thanks to your wonderful pills, I am again enabled daily to produce a thousand words, which you will not gainsay, of literature of a far higher order than in the days when I knew not the Katter-Scatter pills.

Faithfully yours,

Th. de Lace Bimbelow

When Katterby's advertising manager wanted to parse this letter and harness its unhitched sentences

the pillmaker ordered him to let the words lie as they had been allowed to fall.

Professor Gimmel of Dass University was pictured in a romantic hat and foreign attire superintending the efforts of a number of men who were pressing their shovels into the soil of China's bosom and turning up countless fossils of animals that must have roamed China woods and hills in a prehistoric age. Professor Gimmel's face eloquently betrayed his physical torment. The second woodcut presented him going through the motions of an actor; therein he was violently refusing to inspect an anthropoid toe. But in the third picture — ! His communication of approval follows:

My dear Katterby,

By what strange process have you transmuted the ingeniousness of your brain and the cascara bark of our California buckthorn into this blessing? I do not really know what I should do without it now that I have tried it. I believe that existence for me would be futile, my years of study in the science of anthropology no longer of value, if I were to be left to shift among the rocks of life without your energizing pills. You are an unusual man, I must say, and deserve high rank among the serious scientists of this age. With the best wishes of

(Signed) OLAF BASE GIMMEL.

The activities of Doctors Babb and Cohen, of the faculty of Befuddleya College, were also shown in pictures, their enthusiastic tribute in text. More impressive perhaps than their letter were the cuts, which revealed, first, a laboratory wherein Doctors Babb and Cohen could be seen stooped over the prostrated body of an old man, whose thyroid gland they were critically inspecting. It seemed as though Babb was giving his impressions to Cohen who appeared to be jotting them down with his fountainpen.

In the second picture the professors were seen gracefully depositing a Katter-Scatter pill in the opened mouth of the patient. In the third, both gentlemen were bowing modestly to the reader with their glistening eyes — glistening no doubt with triumph — under their lowered heads.

Of much similar matter was the amazing eighth edition composed. And many luckless nonowners impotently committed deeds of a desperateness that was appalling, in vain efforts to procure copies of the book.

CHAPTER VI

The professors of the University of Dass were uniformly absentminded. Bright men who joined the faculty soon lost themselves in the labyrinthine methods used to impart knowledge. The professors were so absentminded in fact, that many students who registered at the university were enabled to loaf at ease for four years. Saltpirate Pete, angel to the institution, had more than once threatened it with immediate and utter extinction. Every time he recollected how narrowly the university had missed being named after him, he would bluster himself into a hemorrhage, and ordered then to take a trip, would return more truculent than ever. How the university came to be so singularly named is worth the telling:

On the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone Professor Gimmel, a vigorous man born somewhere in Ulster County, read his dedicatory speech from typewritten notes. As he paused, for dramatic effect, to pronounce the institution for ever the Saltpirate Pete University, a small boy's plaintive voice arose from the attentive crowd: "Ma, dass I go off 'n' play?"

The Professor of Anthropology went on solemnly, "And I do name thee Dass, O bright star of the intellectual firmament." There was much confusion, of course. Saltpirate Peter, who had been taking in the ceremonies from his automobile, collapsed. When he regained consciousness, he vowed that he would drink the blood of the Olaf Base Gimmel. He found the forgetful professor in a low saloon which defied the Sunday closing law, and the sight of the professor's beard deeply immersed in a tall seidel of beer, banished for the time Saltpirate Pete's thoughts of vengeance. In fact he joined the professor, and did so well that for the next three days there was no beer for the regular customers. So Dass University it had been named, and Dass it is today.

One brilliant Sunday afternoon, before a large gathering of male and female graduates, Professor Gimmel with much elaborateness presented as speaker of the occasion, Benjamin Katterby. The pillmaker was applauded roundly as he strode forward on the platform and patiently awaited the cessation of all sound before beginning his address. Then he proceeded to liberate his ideas on men and women, on their interests in life, on life itself, on all sorts of jokes, on Katter-Scatter pills of course, and so on. That which follows you would have cared most to have preserved:

"Diligence is a human weakness which usually we prefer to detect in others. In a workingman it is a virtue and his salvation; in a capitalist a vice. But all virtues are questionable; all are simply the obligations which the strong have foisted upon the helpless. Vices, in brief, are the preferences of our constrained bodies. So you will not begin your matured period of existence with a predetermined sense of what many grownup people are still calling 'values.' Some of you, it is possible, will find work at the Katterby Factories, Inc., and there you will of course be given an opportunity to work for the salvation of the human anatomy. Maybe, some of you will enter heartily into the spirit that prevails at the plant, a spirit that is evocative, at least, of better things than often one meets with today.

"Again, some of you may embark upon the perilous not to say plebian voyage of marriage. Well, that is one of the fatalities of life, and I dismiss it with the feeling that you will handle the situation, when it confronts you, as relatively as possible. The only objection I have to marriage is that it includes too many relationships. Marriage should have nothing to do at any time with fathers and mothers and brothers and cousins and sisters and aunts and uncles and churches and lawyers and doctors and money. Marriage, as we practice the business today, is a condition of affairs wherein

the male, having gotten him a female and paraded her for a time as his greatest social decoration, gives her her freedom to become more or less of an eyesore; just as he eventually becomes a Gout. The domesticated female of today is simply an automaton whose exercises are limited by the size of her apartments. The domesticated male creature, daily to be observed on city streets, is a conservative and suspicious, publicly moral and privately childish chap whose sanctioned authority over his wife is one of his degenerating influences. His sole esthetic he achieves when he goes into a corner with a member of his species and swaps what are called dirty stories. Ask him to recite a poem, or express what appreciation he can indulge in of the wonders of nature. Ask him to tell you his conceptions of God, or of morality, or of the freedom which women seek. To all he will say that you are a confounded atheist. He will grow solemn and babyish and he will whisper in your ear that you will be blasted in hell if you do not mend your ideas.

"But he knows all there is to know of public fashions and customs, and particularly of politics. He will tell you eagerly why you should interest yourself in the political aspirations of some egregious saloonkeeper or wardheeler. With solemn wonder he will explain his world of socialized authority.

He will hold discourse with you on the superiority of certain ethnically separate divisions of the human race, over other divisions.

"Enough! Hear now my litany: From all who believe in a hereafter, or in a Divine Providence, in moralistic distinctions, in mythologies, in the humanizing power of literary expression; who feel themselves upheld by scarifiers of natural phenomena, who must have laws to keep them from becoming overly drunk, sexually abnormal, overly wealthy through the protection of organized institutions, overly wise through unconventional studies, — from all such creatures O my Good Friends Deliver Me."

The graduates and faculty did not understand a word of what Katterby was saying and applauded enthusiastically. And it is proper here to add that upon Katterby was conferred the honor of an appointment to the Chair of the Human Graces as Conducted by the University of Dass.

CHAPTER VII

Katterby's social prominence could not long temper the force of his expressions. The discord between them was reflected within the next few years in the undisguisedly bitter treatment which he received from prominent and powerful men who had sought his friendship. His industrial power and perplexingly accurate reflections on the life about him made him increasingly unpopular. Gradually requests for his attendance at public functions ceased. This pleased him inordinately. Years ago he had suspected that his growth would bring upon him not only the adulation of industrial co-equals, but later, their abjuration of him and his what they termed fantastic ideas. But for his influence over the mediums of publicity he would have been mercilessly depreciated as a public asset. And he was shrewd enough to increase and not lessen, his advertising appropriations. Many newspapers and magazines at one time or another were liberally supported by the money that came from Katterby's adroitly manoeuvred advocacy of his cure for human stomachs. Once humorously yet sincerely esteemed, he was now a power feared by

other powers in the field of business. But his employees swore by him.

There was a good cause for the enmity which he and his daily activities aroused. His educational aids had made his factories very popular with imaginative workmen. All sought employment under him. No other industry was there where employer showed such munificent regard for employee. Hence the hatred for Katterby by industrial captains.

But the pillmaker treated lightheartedly the pronounced change of his fellows' attitude. He no doubt would have continued his journey through the span of years that remained to him, exercising his faculties of humor and tolerance, had not his enemies revealed their malevolence so provokingly!

When Mrs. Katterby succumbed unexpectedly to pneumonia and Katterby was shocked as never before in his life, he got not one word of condolence from the members of his own economic caste. This it was that puzzled him. I sat with him in one of the living rooms of the Lake Shore Drive mansion, through his nightlong watch over the composed body in the modest black coffin that lay upon an especially provided support. Katterby said not a word to me, nor to Elizabeth when she came into the room and pressed her flushed and beteaured face against his shoulder seeking comforting utterances. I repicture mentally how he disengaged one hand

from under his lowered head and passed his arm about her. He seemed to hug her with an air of bitterness.

For several weeks after the funeral at Sacaston, for Katterby had his wife buried in Sacaston Cemetery, he remained at the Chicago residence and consented to see only a few persons.

He remained taciturn the rest of his life. He who had never been harsh was now harsh and cynical. One day, in his library, while he sat swinging his short nervous legs to and from his tipped armchair he dispelled our silence, saying, "My emotional outbursts have made thinking very difficult for me. But I am able clearly to realize that I who could reflect on birth, on death; who tried honestly to gratify my curiosity with intelligent reasoning, am helpless in the face of this elemental fact which has so suddenly struck me and made me numb. I can now plainly see myself as one of the pathetic creatures who suggested so much material for cogitation to me. There's no sense in complaining, but we worldlings with our ambitions and our strivings and our daily activities are shriveled up with terrific simplicity by the fact of Death. Helpless mannikins, we.

"I find it hard to believe that my wife is dead," he added, presently. "She and I occupied so much of each other's interests from childhood on. When

I in my youth began to pursue her she was helping her father to run a music goods store on Gower Street. I had won my certificate as a druggist from the State University and was getting the actual experience in an old drugstore across the street from my wife's place.

"The day we were engaged a fossil was extracted from the bank of the Sacaston River near Hinesville, about seven miles north of Sacaston. The local newspaper printed a reproduction of the photograph that was taken of the vertebrate, which was of the Permian period, and had the characteristics of some reptilian fish. The form that went to press with the cut of the fossil got pied, and in many copies of the paper there was a picture of Marthe, my wife, directly across the column pica-rule, jammed into the picture of the fossil. Marthe's portrait had been published with comments on our engagement. There was a good deal of talk by the superstitious folk and one female croaker told Marthe's father that he would do well to call the engagement off. Well, Marthe and I didn't wait for her father to decide. We hired a buggy, drove to Hinesville, and were married there."

A moment later he said: "Gosh, to be the simplest fisherman with mainly the weather to worry about, maybe. If I had never given that cascara to Doc Buder!" The inflection in his voice deep-

ened suddenly. "He's dead too, you know. Quite forgot to tell you, didn't I?" He lounged in his chair and resumed the brisk swinging of his short legs. "We are the blankest sentimentalists ever. I think I can see now why we have to prod one another eternally to evoke laughter. . . Pain seems gratuitous, or rather, more natural to us. But what is the difference between pain and laughter? Essentially none. Both are avenues of physical release, through which our liberated emotions pass helter-skelter, madly, bitterly, or with an air, each mannerism indicative of the idiosyncrasies of us all. Pain is purely a forewarning of sensation; laughter, an after effect of sensation. We can never truly laugh and be conscious of our mirth at the same time. Wonder what the increase of human knowledge will do to both these primal avenues of physical release: Refine pain, perhaps. Maybe we'll have to develop professional laughers to discharge emotions we will have lost ownership of. . . Why don't you say something? You sit there looking at me sympathetically. Fancy!

"Did I ever tell you the story of the blindman who was lost on a mountainside? Well, he tapped about with his stick and made a fuss and soon the mythological devil crashed his head through the earth and shattered the village at the foot of the mountain with the avalanche of forest and rocks

which he thus uprooted. The devil was sore. 'What in hell are you making all this fuss about?' he said. 'If you're blind, and can't see, pray to God. But if you keep on bothering us below I'll take you myself.'

"Said the blindman: 'Aw, go home! I'm all right. I got friends; they will look after me.'

"The devil laughed. 'They will look after me,' he mimicked. 'That's the trouble with all you top-floor neighbors. You're always raising a rumpus over our heads with your everlasting helping of one another.'

" 'Why shouldn't I get help,' said the blindman, 'I can't see.'

" 'What you want is Sweetness and Light,' said the devil; 'what you get is a little more charity.' And the devil stuck out his thumb, fixed the blindman under the fingernail, and disappeared with him below."

Katterby arose: "So don't stare sympathetically; that is being charitable. And charity belongs with the other crimes. Let's get some fresh air."

CHAPTER VIII

Elizabeth Katterby's thirtieth birthday was simply celebrated. A dinner in her honor was given by her father, at the Lake Shore Drive home. There were present, besides Elizabeth and her father, her companion, a young woman named Bates, her older sister Margaret Felly, the latter's husband, and myself. Dignified expressions of wonder were conferred upon the gifts Elizabeth had received from her relatives. Friends she had none. For the last ten years she had lived the life of a recluse at her father's Chicago home during the summer and at the fruit grove in Florida during the winter.

She had always been sensitive to influences that could never have been physically beneficial. Her daily interests appeared to be the reactions of a peculiar complex. Able to concentrate on her ordinary needs, she was never thoroughly able to realize them. She could not have been, for she was prone to encourage tendencies that mechanically limited her experiences. For the last several years, in fact, Elizabeth Katterby had lived in a world peopled by phantasms which she herself had evolved to take the place of a real world she was afraid to live in.

In all things she was naively simple. Her father observed her with much concern in the last year and more of her life, for she was beginning to talk of the strangest hallucinations; of experiences outside of the mental life of normal persons. Katterby was afraid that some day he would be hurt through her. He never said anything about it but I know that he was perturbed by her growing indifference to even the ordinary details of life; to the details, for instance, of clothes, personal hygiene, mental stimulation, and so on.

Lately she had displayed an air of liveliness that danced strangely about her. Miss Bates, her companion, was an intelligent young woman, not unattractive, but rather morbid, I thought. One day I found her in the arms of Katterby's butler, in the darkened corner of the drawing room. She was startled by my unpremeditated approach. I left the room hurriedly. Although I never spoke of the matter to anyone — nor did she negotiate my confidence — I believe that Elizabeth would not have killed herself as she did, nor when she did, had Miss Bates been dismissed.

Elizabeth had formed the habit of retiring shortly after dinner. The arrival of Miss Bates did not disturb that habit, for they retired together, to pass the hours, as we thought, before bedtime, in talk, in reading, in various minor affairs that most

interested them. One evening, not long after the birthday party, Katterby sent for his daughter. He showed me a new bracelet he wanted to give her. He was always bringing things home to her and in many ways soliciting her affections. The maid who had gone for her returned presently saying that she had looked everywhere but could not find her.

Katterby was not so much surprised as worried. The hours passed slowly in the library where Katterby said he would wait until Elizabeth came home. Presently he went upstairs, stayed for a little while, and called to me from the staircase. I went up to him and we looked about the rooms Elizabeth occupied. Everything seemed to be in order. Her taste in art, however, was curious. She seemed to have specialized on nude figures of an exaggerated erotic impulse so overwhelmingly overdone by Continental artists in the last decade. A more workable picture of Elizabeth took form in my mind as I assembled certain characteristics of hers. Presently her father and I went downstairs and he asked me to sit through the night with him. He added that he thought it best for us to stay in the dark, and he switched out the electric lights. How long we sat there I can not say, for I was sleeping when Katterby roughly shook me. Presently I became conscious of the swishing of skirts on stairstep edges and was by that time fairly alive to what was going

on. Katterby then went quietly into the hallway and stood listening there. He was extremely frightened when he came back. "I heard Elizabeth laugh," he whispered. I was surprised by the tone. "Hysterically," he added, with as much significance as he dared at that time convey. I was not able to reassure him.

From that night forward Katterby spent much of his time closely watching his daughter. About a year passed. The usual interests that filled in Katterby's existence still fascinated him, although he aged rapidly. He would not willingly give up further exploitation of his pills. He was not yet averse to the playing of new tricks that would again excite interest in his product, and I believe that in the last few years of his life he tried to associate his cure-all for the stomach with more necessary social elements; with food, clothes and so on. One morning, in his office, he took me into his confidence.

"I was tipped off last night. By a detective," he added, shamefacedly. "Well, this anxiety was getting to be too much. But I want to tell you: I followed Elizabeth last night. Some horrible North Side dump, a regular hole in the wall, right near the lake. You go across the river, turn east, and walk two blocks. I was too agitated, I suppose, to make a mental note of the place, but it is, I believe,

what is left of an old fashioned private house. The stone steps are jagged and pieces are broken off, even. You have to hang on to a rusty iron railing to get into the building. . . .

"I found Elizabeth there with the Bates girl. I phoned Dr. Branter. He came quickly and took care of them. Later I shipped the Bates girl back to her home. Doc gave Elizabeth some dope, but he isn't very cheerful. Frankly, have you suspected what's wrong with her?"

"I have."

He stared queerly, then said: "Doctor Branter told me, an hour ago. He's looking after her now, or was, rather, when I left the house. I'm expecting a telephone call any moment." He lighted a cigar and stared with an air of determination at me. "I suppose you think I'm worrying my head off. Well, I am! But I'm prepared for the worst. I've about decided to put Elizabeth in a place where she'll be able to move freely about and become sensitive to fresh air, simple food, and the other deficiencies of a blank existence. I'd hate to tell you what's wrong with her. But when I think of what Elizabeth's gone through, and how she and her environment came to grips, it makes me feel like a criminal. I wonder how many fathers and mothers feel that way. Or do they ever think of life in that

way? Mightly few people really give the matter any thought. . . .”

He sat with his hat on, very plainly awaiting combat with a powerful enemy. I thought of how he had looked when his wife died.

There's no need of repeating what every newspaper printed and revamped for weeks following Elizabeth's suicide. We all know that the moment the doctor left her she shot herself in bed, and laughed and spat blood about until she could no longer breathe. But in the moments that elapsed between the time his daughter killed herself and the time Katterby was informed there was the most prosaic scene you could imagine. Katterby was nervous, of course; he expected to learn how Elizabeth was getting on. While he remained by the telephone he glanced at some letters that required his attention. But the instant the bell jangled out he dropped his correspondence, and seized the telephone receiver. I could barely hear . . . “shot in bed” and the words broken in by sobs of the servant. Very distinctly do I remember Katterby, his hat on his ear, his cigar under his right forefinger, his sharp jaws opening and closing, and then his sudden, half-defiant, half-frightened — “What! what the hell are you trying to do? — scare me?”

CHAPTER IX

Thereafter Katterby kept himself in seclusion. He had already transferred his factories to his son-in-law, and refrained from further exploitation of his pills. Instead, he concentrated on certain botanical experiments in his Florida grove. The last time I saw him he had come to Chicago to wind up some business details before going back to the South to stay, he told me, until he died. "The chances are I shall not live much longer," he said, as we sat by the immense fireplace in the library of his home, which, by the way, he had given to his daughter Margaret.

"I have gone through a fearfully great number of repeated motions, daily. Interesting enough, but when a chap is sixty-one, he wants to go fishing, or read Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Izaak Walton. . . . Not that I do it. There are too many people in this world who persist in keeping dead things alive. They are forever resurrecting old and wornout sentiments, stale retwistings of dead men's dead ideas, dead books. . . . Why try to revitalize anything that is past and done for? Aren't we daily encountering new significations in social and

natural phenomena? The fact that there are a lot of people who can't realize what vital changes are continuously going on, means nothing. Imagine! We have to go to public forums, or the newspapers, when we want to generate an idea or two in order to understand one another better. . . .

"People are busy today trying to get America to have a national literature, more pronounced, that is, than she has had. Well, we've had Whitman, and Mark Twain. But who knows anything about this?" And he reached for his copy of Carl Snyder's "The World Machine," and began to read while the fire crackled and leapt here and there in angular flashes. . . .

"The individual life is of little consequence to the race. The aggregate life of the race seems of little consequence to the earth. Billions upon billions of coral polyps may materially alter the surface of the globe. Probably their work will be of more consequence, will have effected greater changes in terrestrial conditions, than all that will ever be effected by man himself. It may be that the human race has yet a long time to run, compared with the relative brevity of its past. It may be that human achievement has hardly begun. Be that as it may, it will one day be finished.

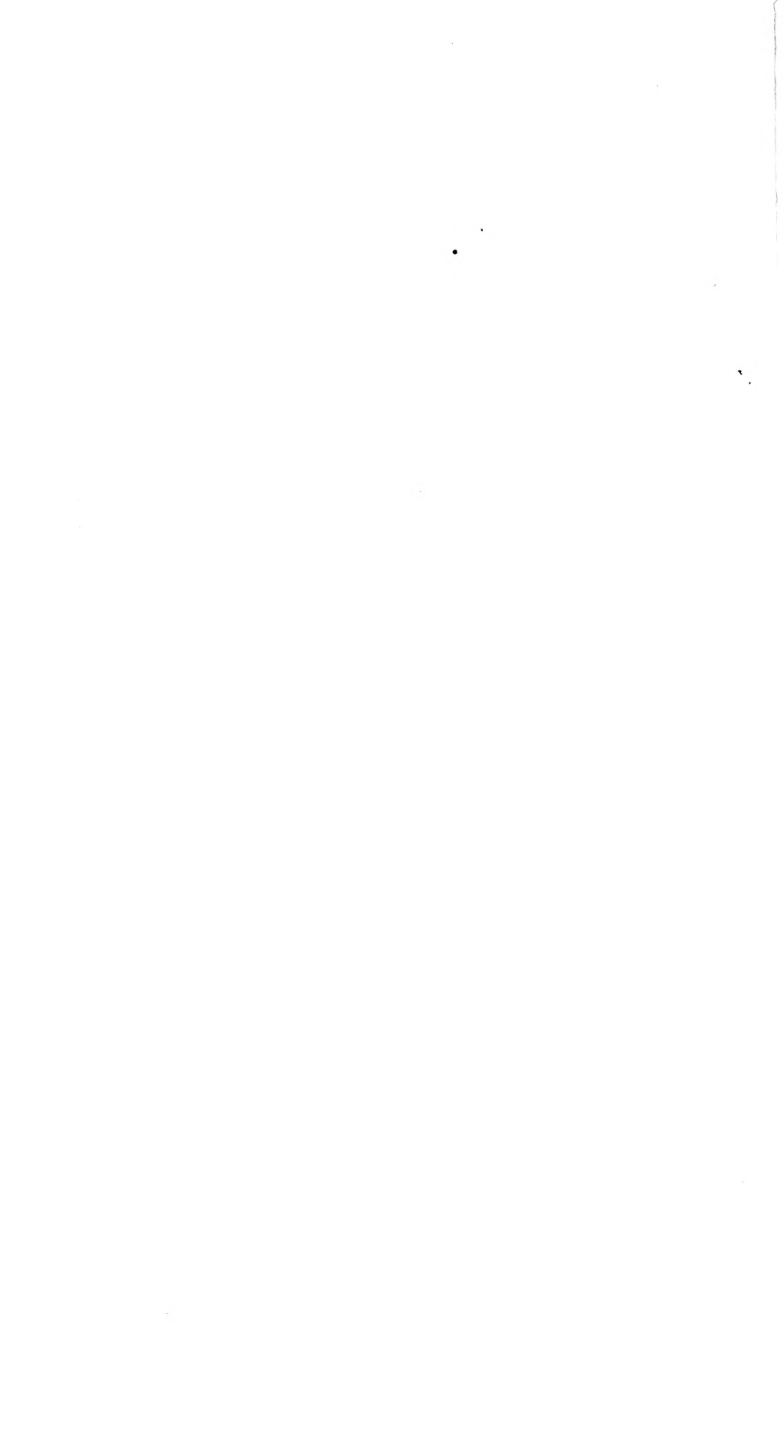
"So far as we can now perceive, human civilization is but a flutter of consciousness amid the wide cycle of life that sweeps through from lichen and bacterium to saurian monster and back again. And the cycle of life is but an evanescent moment in the

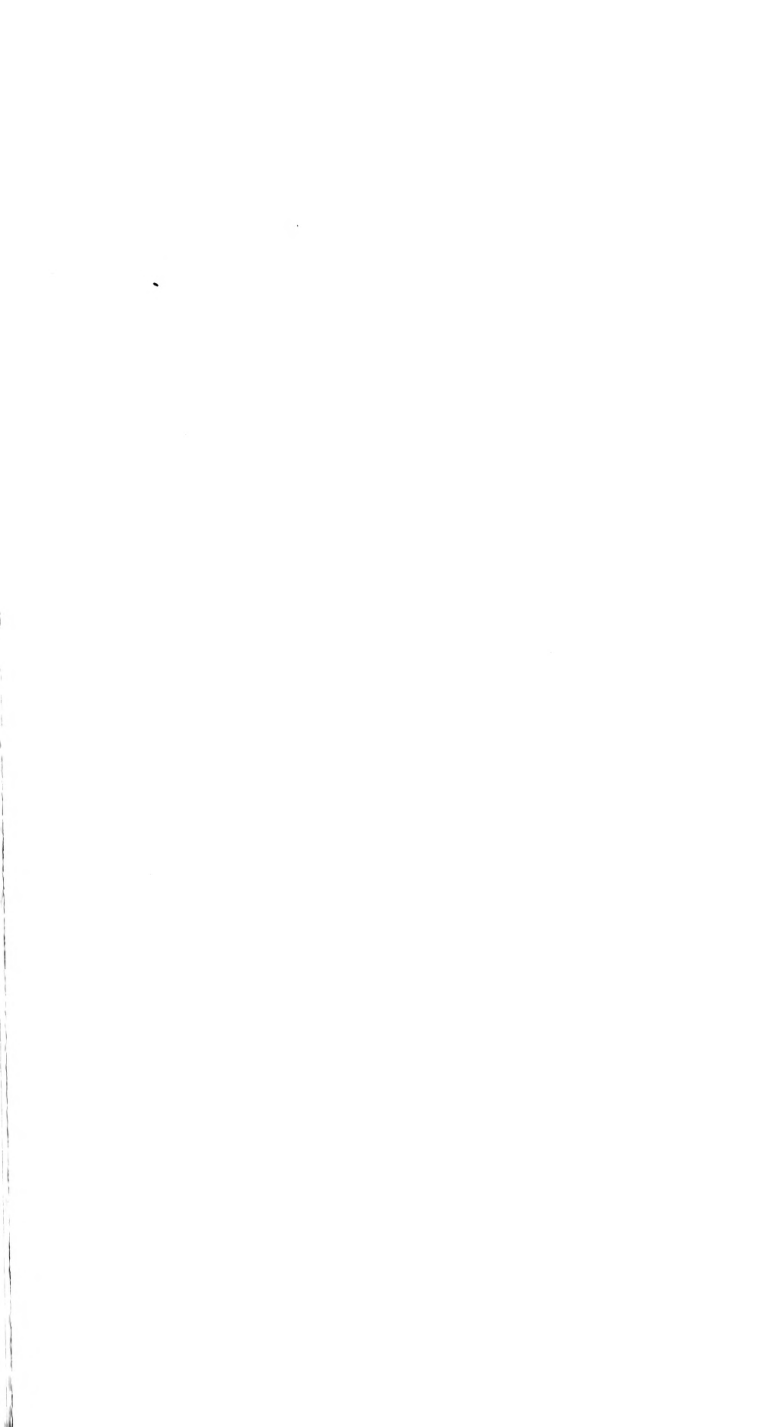
history of the globe. The history of the globe is in its turn but an evanescent moment in the cycle of the stars; suns glow for a little time, and planets bear the fruitage of plants and animals and men, then turn for aeons in a drear and icy lifelessness."

Katterby stared at me with an ecstatic grin. "Isn't that beautiful, you . . . ?"

THE END







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